

GENEALOGICAL AND PERSONAL  
**HISTORY**  
OF  
LYCOMING COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA.

---

UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPERVISION OF

EMERSON COLLINS,  
of Williamsport, Pennsylvania,

AND

JOHN W. JORDAN, LL.D.,  
of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

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*"Knowledge of kindred and the genealogies of the ancient families  
deserveth the highest praise. Herein consisteth a part of the knowledge  
of a man's own self. It is a great spur to look back on the worth of our  
line."*—LORD BACON.

*"There is no heroic poem in the world but is at the bottom the life  
of a man."*—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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***EXCERPT and CITATION***

Index - volume 1 only...

Index - volume 2...

Study notes of the **Bennett** family - volume 2...

by Jesse Carpenter

## INTRODUCTORY. 1136131

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The history of Pennsylvania and of its various political subdivisions has been written by various authors and at various times, each succeeding writer adding a new chapter of annals, or treating his subject from a different view point. Such history, splendid narrative that it is, is principally concerned, however, with what has been accomplished by the people in the mass, and takes little note of individuals, except those so pre-eminent as leaders as to come under the full glare of fame.

Hence it follows that genealogical and family memoirs are of peculiar importance, including, as they do, the personal annals of those who make heroes possible—those who have marched in the ranks of progress, bearing the heat and burden of the day—portraying the spirit which actuated them, and holding up their effort for an example to those who come afterward. As was written by Martineau: “To have had forefathers renowned for honorable deeds, to belong by nature to those who have bravely borne their part in life and refreshed the world with mighty thoughts and healthy admiration, is a privilege which it were mean and self-willed to despise. It is as a security given for us of old, which it were false-hearted not to redeem; and in virtues bred of a noble stock, mellowed as they are by reverence, there is often a grace and ripeness wanting to self-made and brand-new excellence. Of like value to a people are heroic national traditions, giving them a determinate character to sustain among the tribes of men, making them familiar with images of great and strenuous life, and kindling them with faith in glorious possibilities.”

Every community with a history worthy of the name will appreciate in high degree a genealogical and personal history of its leading families and prominent citizens. Such a work is that which is now presented, containing in permanent form the family annals of one of the most interesting sections of the country. Containing, as it does, a history of the most important families of the county, and tracing their descendants to every part of the Union, it possesses value of the highest



importance in its historic utility as a memorial of the development and progress of the community from its first settlement, and in the personal interest attaching to the personal records. On both these accounts it will prove a useful contribution to current literature and a valuable legacy to future generations. The preservation of the data thus collected will afford the means of illustrating and confirming, and, in some instances, of correcting and amending, extant histories. More than this, it will supply material for future historians. The genealogical records will enable the reader to trace the lines of conspicuous families from the first settlers of the county, through their various branches, at home and elsewhere, to the living representatives.

Beginning with the coming of the Swedes to the banks of the river Delaware, in the early part of the seventeenth century, down to the present early days of the twentieth century, the vast region known by the distinguishing name of Pennsylvania, at first a province and now a commonwealth of commanding importance, has held, at whatever stage of its development, a conspicuous and highly important place in its relationship to the sisterhood of states comprising the great and unbroken Federal Union. It was the central colony and the connecting link between the north and south for many years during the formative governmental epoch. Its men of influence molded the political history of the American people during a long and stirring period. Its principal city was long the seat of government of the United States, and has been, from the earliest days to the present, a principal center of all that marks the progress of civilization—in the arts and sciences, in every product of human mind and hand. Not once in the almost two and a half centuries of its existence has Pennsylvania retrograded or stood still; its career has ever been a steadfast and unfaltering forward.

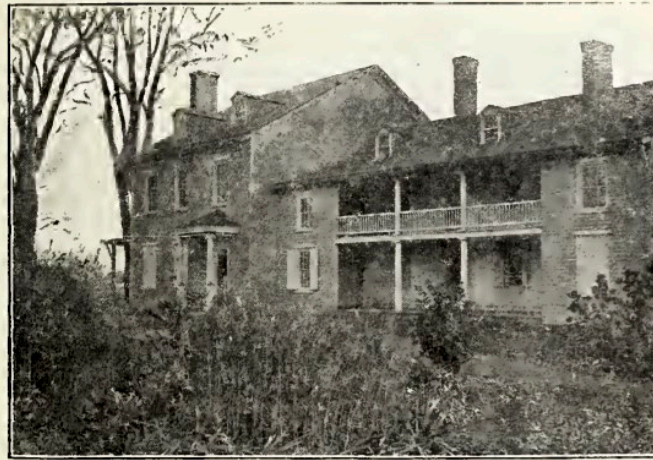
In the long chapter of progress made by the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the county of Lycoming occupies a most honorable place. As originally constituted, it was an empire in extent, about twelve thousand square miles in area, out of which magnificent domain have been carved, in whole or in part, thirteen other counties—Armstrong, Bradford, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Indiana, Jefferson, McKean, Potter, Sullivan, Tioga, Venango and Warren.

The few people who inhabited the territory of Lycoming in the colonial era, before its creation as a county, were of sterling character, possessing in marked degree those traits and virtues which distinguished

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the best type of pioneers. Plain farmers and humble mechanics, probably without what might be termed a lettered man among them, yet were they men of no ordinary mold. Great as was their strength of character, and broad (for the times) as was their mental scope, they were building far better than they knew. Simple and clean in their lives, the homes which they builded were humble, but they were the seat of the domestic virtues, and the children they reared inherited the athletic frame, rugged constitution and deep-seated principles of their forbears. These, too, in their day aided in the establishment of a free national government,



Old Wallis House, near Hartley Hall, in Muncy Township; oldest house in Lycoming County.

and to them belongs a unique distinction, that of being the actors in the most remarkable coincident of the Revolutionary struggle. Here on Pine Creek, on Indian lands, outside of the jurisdiction of all provincial law, on the Fourth of July, 1776, the "Squatter Sovereigns" (as they were termed), separated from the Continental Congress at Philadelphia by a space of more than two hundred miles, and entirely ignorant of the momentous action of that body (although it was anticipated, but without a thought as to when the mighty moment should come), drew up and adopted a series of resolutions absolving themselves from all allegiance to Great Britain, and declaring themselves free and independent henceforth and forever.

In the following years of war against kingly authority, it was the



fortune of the sons of Lycoming to bear a gallant part in the great struggle. Of those who served in the Continental ranks, some were among Morgan's riflemen at Quebec and Saratoga. Those who remained behind were called upon to fight a hideous foe in defense of their homes and families against the Indian hordes, and, while thus protecting their own doors, serve a double purpose in so diverting consid-



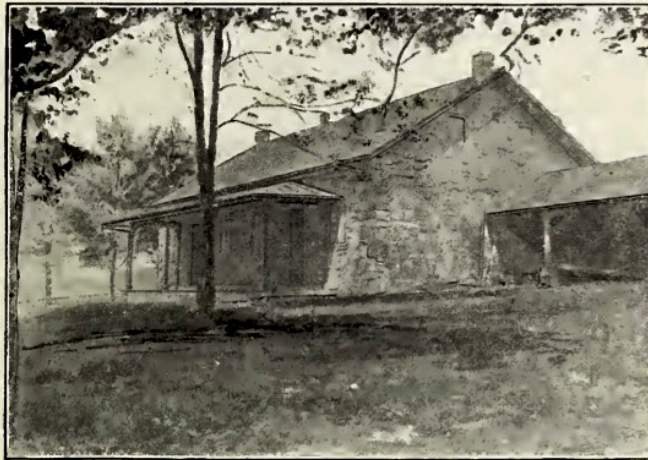
Old Russell Inn, first house in Williamsport.

erable numbers of their enemies as to give protection, in a measure, to their compatriots serving under Washington in New Jersey and lower Pennsylvania. So it came about that the portion of Lycoming county lying north of the Muncy Hills and westward along the Susquehanna river to the Indian lands above Lycoming Creek, was the theatre, during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, of many of the most sanguinary conflicts known in the history of the country. In the region referred to there was scarcely a square mile of ground that was left unstained by

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blood and unscarred by flame. Frequent descents were made by bands of hostile savages, who burned the cabins and slaughtered with fiendish barbarity, or carried into captivity, the settlers who were unable to make their escape. It was here that occurred, in the midheat of the Revolutionary war, in July of 1778, the great panic, or "Big Runaway," as it is known in the local annals of the day, and which stands without a parallel in the history of American pioneer settlements, when the Muncy Hills region was forsaken by its population, who in hurried flight sought escape from the Indians, Tories and British, fresh from their slaughter

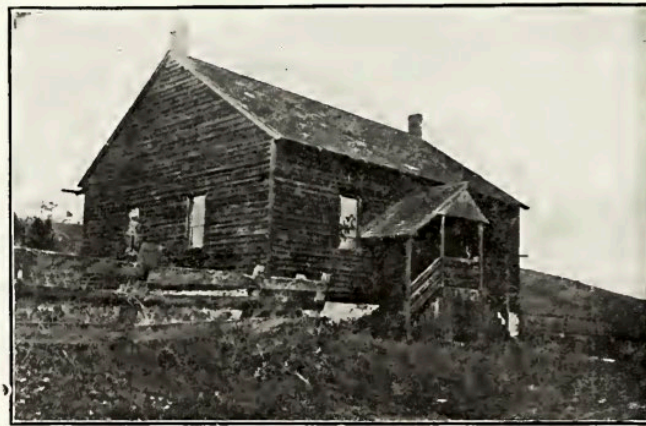


Friends' Meeting House at Pennsdale.

work at Wyoming, the pathway of the fleeing settlers made lurid by the flames of their burning homes, fired by the pursuing enemy. One relic of those days of dreadful horror is yet preserved in the old stone portion of the Wallis House, near Hartley Hall, in Muncy township. This, the oldest building in Lycoming county, was built in 1770, by Samuel Wallis. During the "Big Runaway" it was abandoned by its owner, but escaped destruction on account of the great solidity of its stone walls, though it is believed that the roof was burned off and the interior woodwork destroyed. It was thoroughly restored by Mr. Wallis, who there dispensed, for the times, a liberal and elegant hospitality. The old mansion was the scene of many important gatherings, and in it were held the first meetings of Friends in Lycoming county.



How quickly the people turned to the arts of peace so soon as the oppressor was gone and his savage allies driven westward, is discovered in the fact that education and religion became their chief concern after they had fairly established the machinery of civil government. The county of Lycoming was created by Act of Assembly in 1795, which became a law by the signature of Governor Thomas Mifflin on April 13 of that year. Jaysburg, where the county seat was first located, was soon abandoned for the more promising site of Williamsport. Here for two years (1797-98) were held the courts of the county, in the Russell Inn, a log building erected by James Russell in 1796. This was not



Blooming Grove Dunker Church, Hepburn Township.

only the first house in Williamsport for the entertainment of travelers, but it was the first building of any description in the place, and for many years all matters of public moment were discussed and determined upon within its walls. It remained as an interesting landmark until it was burned down during the great fire of 1871. From the humble village beginning of Williamsport has developed a modern city with a population of forty thousand souls. The seat of many and varied industries, its religious and educational institutions are also abundantly cared for, and its principal school is of wide fame. Dickinson Seminary, the logical outgrowth of the Williamsport Academy of 1811, has figured largely in its graduates in ministerial, literary, political and commercial



fields, both at home and abroad, and its influence and usefulness were never wider than at the present time.

Lycoming county possesses an equally interesting religious history. Two ancient congregations link the present with the past. The Friends' Meeting House at Pennsdale (founded in 1799) is one of the oldest places of worship in the county, and has heard the voices of some of the most eminent preachers, men and women, during more than a century past. At Blooming Grove, in Hepburn township, is the old Dunker church edifice erected in 1828. The baptisms administered at this old church marked the beginning of a religious epoch of peculiar interest and significance—the founding of the first organized German Baptist church in the United States.

In each generation, and at every stage of progress, the people of Lycoming county have had the service of men of the loftiest character and highest capability, in arms, in the arts of peace, in statesmanship, in affairs and in letters. It is to connect the active progressive men of the present generation with their illustrious ancestry that the present volumes were undertaken, in the conviction that—

“It is indeed a blessing when the virtues  
Of noble races are hereditary,  
And do derive themselves from the imitation  
Of virtuous ancestors.”

The honorable ancestry which belongs to the people of Lycoming county is a noble heritage, and the story of its achievements is a sacred trust committed to its descendants, upon whom devolves the perpetuation of their record. History is constantly making, and that of yesterday and to-day is as important in its place as that of the centuries past. Throughout the county are those who are memorialized in these pages, through whose sagacity, determination and philanthropy states and communities have been benefited in material ways and in religious, educational and political affairs—in all that stands for progress and improvement.

For aid in the preparation of these volumes especial thanks are due to Mr. Emerson Collins, of Williamsport, of more than local fame as a genealogist and historian. Out of his abundant store of material, familiarity with the official records of Lycoming county and intimate ac-

quaintance with its people, he has been enabled to point with accurate knowledge to the ancestral history of various leading families, and to the personal history of conspicuous men of affairs in his native county. This has been with him no perfunctory task, but a labor of love, well becoming one who holds in sincere appreciation the sturdy race from whom he sprang, and among whom he was reared, and who possesses the rare ability of rightly weighing their lives and achievements.

With reference to the biographical matter contained in these pages, it is to be said that in its preparation the publishers have observed the utmost care. With such a mass of material, as a matter of necessity the work must needs be committed to various writers. If, in some cases, the sketch should be incomplete or faulty, the shortcoming is ascribable to the paucity of data furnished, many families being without exact records in their family lines. In all cases the sketches have been submitted to the subject or to his representative for correction and revision.

It is believed that the present work will prove a real addition to the existing mass of literature concerning the people of the county of Lycoming, and that, without it, much valuable information would be irretrievably lost, owing to the passing away of many custodians of family records and the dispersion and disappearance of such matter.

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## W. ASHER BENNETT.

W. Asher Bennett, proprietor of the Bennett Hotel, Jersey Shore, is a representative of an old and highly estimable family of Susquehanna township, Lycoming county, where his birth took place June 3, 1867. His grandfather, George Bennett, who was one of the pioneers in that locality, at one time owned nearly the entire township. His parents, Thomas and Amanda (Yeager) Bennett, were natives of Susquehanna township, and his father was a well-to-do farmer. Thomas Bennett was one of the progressive men of his locality who participated actively in local public affairs, and served with ability in most of the important township offices. He died in 1889 and his wife died ten years later. Their family consisted of eleven children, nine of whom grew to maturity, and of these the only ones now living are Oscar, Gussie and W. Asher. The others were Oliver, Ellsworth, Charles, Howard, George and Harry.

After completing his education, which was acquired in the public schools, W. Asher Bennett learned telegraphy and became an operator in the service of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad Company. In 1885 he accepted the responsible position of chief train dispatcher on the New York Central and Hudson River Railway, and continued in that capacity to the company's entire satisfaction for a period of eighteen years, when he resigned. In 1902 he purchased his present hotel in Jersey Shore, which was erected in the previous year by W. S. Dunkle, and in 1905 he enlarged and improved the property. The Bennett is centrally located and finely equipped as regards furniture, fixtures and modern conveniences. It has ample accommodations for the average number of travelers, and its dining-room is capable of seating seventy-five guests. In his new line of business the proprietor has become deservedly popular,

and his long connection with the railway service, in which he acquired a large number of friends and acquaintances among the traveling public, is sufficient to insure for him a liberal patronage.

Mr. Bennett has served in the borough council two consecutive terms, having been one of the first members from the third ward after its addition to the borough, and he is now a member of the board of assessors. His fraternity affiliations are with Jersey Shore Lodge No. 101, I. O. O. F. In 1897 he was united in marriage with Miss Lizzie B. Smith, of Beach Creek township.

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CLINTON L. THOMAS.

The Thomas family, of which Clinton L. Thomas is a worthy representative in the present generation, was founded in America by John Thomas, who was born in England, July 25, 1770, and during his boyhood crossed the Atlantic Ocean, settling in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He served an apprenticeship at the trade of cutler, and when proficient therein accompanied his brothers—George, Jesse, Thomas, Samuel and William—to Piatt township, Lycoming county. They purchased the old iron furnace on Larry's creek about 1798, which they operated for several years, and then disposed of to Tomb and Slonaker. His wife, Mary (Murphy) Thomas, whom he married December 24, 1797, bore him fourteen children. Mr. Thomas met his death by being thrown from a sleigh on February 20, 1843.

John Thomas, Jr., son of John and Mary (Murphy) Thomas, was born at the Forge on Larry's creek, June 11, 1811. During his boyhood and young manhood he assisted with the labors on the farm, for five years was employed in the saw mill in Loyalsock township which was operated by Manning Stevenson, then followed farming and



Mr. Gibson married, January 16, 1851, Sarah Hyndman, who was born in Ireland, November 16, 1829. Their children are as follows: John R., born December 7, 1851, married Lizzie Young, no issue. Alexander, born March 22, 1854, unmarried, resides on the old homestead. Mary E., born April 1, 1856, unmarried, resides on the old homestead. William A., born October 30, 1858, unmarried, resides on the old homestead. Robert, born April 18, 1861, died May 4, 1861. Annie H., born March 20, 1865, wife of Joseph G. Stewart, and mother of three children. Robert H., born November 27, 1873, married Estella Faultz. Robert R. Gibson, father of these children, died March 24, 1897. He was survived by his wife, Sarah (Hyndman) Gibson, who died January 31, 1901.

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JAMES O. BENNETT.

One of the first of the pioneers of Lycoming county to settle in what is now Susquehanna township was James Bennett, great-grandfather of James O. Bennett, who was formerly a resident of New Jersey. His advent to Nisbet was quite early in the history of Lycoming county, and he took up a large tract of land in Susquehanna township, west of Nisbet, which was known for a long time as the "Bennett Tract," receiving his deed direct from the state as he was the original purchaser. His wife, whose maiden name was Jane Dalton, bore him the following children: George, deceased; James, Elizabeth, Thomas, Wingrove, William, Hannah, Ann and Jane.

George Bennett, grandfather of James O. Bennett, was born in New Jersey. He was about ten years of age when his parents migrated to the state of Pennsylvania. He was reared there and subsequently made large purchases of land, which was then a complete wilderness,

from the state. He was a man of marked ability, and was an active factor in the growth and progress of the community in which he resided. He was instrumental in making the West Branch of the Susquehanna navigable, and served as supervisor during the construction of the Pennsylvania canal. He was justice of the peace for a number of years, and was one of the most intelligent and influential men of his day in that section of the county. He married Mary Carpenter, a native of Pennsylvania, of English parentage, and eight children were born to them: James, George, Ann, Mary, Catherine, Elizabeth, Thomas and Hannah. Elizabeth is the only surviving member of the family, and is now (1905) eighty-nine years of age; she is unmarried. Mr. Bennett married for his second wife Mrs. Colton, no issue.

Thomas Bennett, father of James O. Bennett, was born in Susquehanna township, Lycoming county, Pennsylvania, in 1820. He was a practical farmer, owning and operating one hundred and five acres of fine bottom land, which is now the property of his son, James O. Like his father, Mr. Bennett was a man of marked intelligence and progressive ideas, and served with distinction and credit in several township offices. He was united in marriage to Amanda Yeager, daughter of Jacob and Margaret (Woolever) Yeager, and eleven children were born to them, seven of whom attained years of maturity, namely: Oliver, deceased; Augusta; James O.; Elmer E., deceased; William A.; Howard, deceased; and Charles, deceased. Mr. and Mrs. Yeager were natives of Columbia county, Pennsylvania. Mr. Yeager was a cooper by trade, a first class mechanic, and upon the establishment of a distillery in Nisbet removed thither and was engaged in the manufacture of barrels for use in the same.

James O. Bennett, son of Thomas and Amanda (Yeager) Bennett, was born in Susquehanna township, Lycoming county, Pennsylvania, on



the farm he now owns, May 25, 1861. He was reared in his native township, and attended the common district school. He followed farming up to June, 1880, when he entered the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company as telegraph operator at Nisbet, continuing as such up to 1886. He then accepted a position as train dispatcher for the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Company, in which capacity he served faithfully and well for sixteen years, being then compelled to resign on account of failing health. He has recently returned to his farm, and intends in the future to follow agricultural pursuits. At the present time (1905) he is school director in his township. Socially he is a member of La Belle Lodge No. 232, Free and Accepted Masons, of Jersey Shore, of which honorable body he was worshipful master in 1901. He was made a Mason in 1898. He is a Republican in politics. On February 22, 1897, Mr. Bennett was united in marriage to Lizzie McDermott, daughter of Philip and Josephine McDermott, natives of Ireland. Their children are as follows: Charles F., born August 22, 1897; Nellie E., born June 1, 1899; and James O., Jr., born June 14, 1901.

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#### HARRY S. FAGUE.

Harry S. Fague, a resident of Picture Rocks, Lycoming county, Pennsylvania, was there born October 14, 1870, a son of Abner and Angeline (Bull) Fague. He is a descendant of William Fague, who settled in Penn township, Lycoming county, Pennsylvania, at the close of the revolutionary war. Mr. Fague was the owner of a tract of land, comprising between four and five hundred acres, which is still in the possession of his descendants. Here he erected a homestead on the site where his grandson, W. B. Fague, now resides. On this farm, en-



